

Standard USHC-7: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the economic boom-and-bust in America in the 1920s and 1930s, its resultant political instability, and the subsequent worldwide response.

USHC-7.1 Explain the social, cultural, and economic effects of scientific innovation and consumer financing options in the 1920s on the United States and the world, including the advent of aviation, the expansion of mass production techniques, the invention of new home appliances, and the role of transportation in changing urban life. (H, E)

Taxonomy Level: 2.2 B Understanding/ Comprehension

Previous/future knowledge:

In the 5th grade, students were introduced to the changes in daily life that took place in the 1920s including the improved standard of living; the popularity of new technology such as automobiles, airplanes, radio, and movies; the Harlem Renaissance and the Great Migration; Prohibition; and racial and ethnic conflict (5-4.1).

In the 8th grade, they studied the causes and the effects of changes in South Carolina culture during the 1920s, including... the rise of mass media, increases in tourism and recreation, the revival of the Ku Klux Klan ... (5-6.4).

In 12th grade Economics students will study the economic cycle. Economic conditions of the boom twenties that led to the depression of the thirties will help students to understand basic concepts in Economics. Understanding the continuing economic problems of farmers during the twenties will reinforce students' understanding of the effect of shortages and surpluses in a market economy and changes in the price of products as a result of surplus or shortage that they encountered in USHC 5.3 with the problems of farmers in the late 19th century (ECON-2.4). Understanding the role of the maldistribution of income as a cause of the depression will help students to appreciate how the distribution of income affects public policy (ECON-3.1). An introduction to the role of consumer credit in the form of installment buying of the 1920s that temporarily boosted buying power will help students to understand the impact of personal economic decisions and choices that individuals make including utilizing loans and a study of the stock market crash will offer an opportunity for students to consider investment options (ECON-4.1). Understanding the cultural effect of media advertising of the 1920s will help students to understand the influences on personal economic decision making and choices, including the influence of advertising on consumer choices (ECON 4.2).

It is essential for students to know

Students need to understand the difference between social, cultural and economic factors. They should understand that economic growth may have both positive and negative consequences for society and that the expansion of economic opportunity in the 1920s did not extend to all Americans.

Economic boom of the 1920s had negative consequences for some segments of the economy. By the end of the 1920s, electric energy fueled most of American industry which brought economic hardship to the coal industry. **Mass production techniques** such as the assembly line, introduced by Henry Ford in 1913, brought radios, refrigerators, and many other new products to the marketplace, but also further marginalized the skilled worker. Techniques of efficiency practiced in the 1920s furthered the loss of individuality for the worker. Workers were still underpaid and labor unions were unable to protect their members because of the anti-union attitude of the Republican administrations. Farmers suffered economic depression when the end of World War I brought a loss of markets and surpluses led to low prices and foreclosures, as it had in the late 19th century (USHC 5.3). This led to a widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.'

The mass media exacerbated these differences by advertising the goods that many could not afford to buy. The expansion of the **consumer financing option** of installment buying encouraged consumers to change their attitudes about debt. The ‘buy now, pay later’ philosophy stimulated the economy but later proved harmful (USHC 7.4). The availability of **new home appliances** such as the washing machine, electric irons and vacuum cleaners led to some social change as women were able to do their households chores more easily. However, it led to no significant change in their position in the society or the economy. Although the flapper is an icon of the 1920s and her freedom helped to change attitudes towards the role of women, most women continued the traditional roles as wife and mother. This traditional role was reinforced by advertising.

Transportation helped to change urban life. The automobile changed living and dating patterns for those who could afford to buy a car. Transportation within the cities led to a further differentiation in living and working neighborhoods that further divided the urban community. Suburbs grew (but not as much as in the 1950s). The **advent of aviation** was exciting and produced cultural icons such as Charles Lindberg but had little impact on the average American who could not afford to fly.

It is not essential for students to know:

Students do not need to know about specific efficiency techniques that affected the worker nor do they need to know that the 1920s brought increased professional organization and lobbying. They also do not need to know that oligopolies controlled major industries. They do not need to know about the sports and entertainment celebrities of the 1920s.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments will require students to **explain** the social, cultural and economic changes that took place in the 1920s as a result of scientific innovation and consumer financing. Students should be able to **summarize, classify** and **identify examples** of these changes. Students should be able to **interpret** maps, graphs, political cartoons, images and advertisements and **infer** their relationship to information about the time period. Assessments should also ask students to **interpret** the importance of these changes to American life, **infer** their impact on American and world culture, society and the economy and **compare** its impact on different groups within American society.